Course: RELI 118
Term: Spring 2015
Room: HUM 226
Class: Tuesday & Thursday, 9:25-10:40

RELIGION, MORALITY, AND THE LAW

CONTACT INFORMATION (Where can I find her?)

Instructors: Dr. Elizabeth (Betsy) Barre
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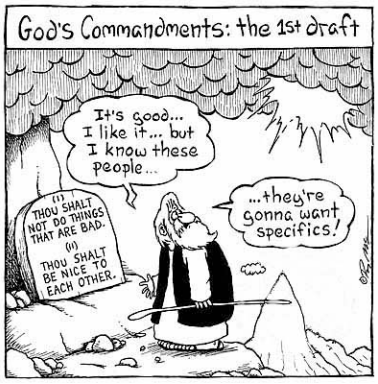
Sign-up here: http://goo.gl/rjHcUu


God's Commandments: the 1st draft
It's good... I like it... but I know these people...
(i) THOU SHALT NOT DO THINGS THAT ARE BAD.
(ii) THOU SHALT BE NICE TO EACH OTHER.
...they're gonna want specifics!

COURSE DESCRIPTION (What will she ask me to think about?)

We all use moral language and make decisions about how we should and should not behave on a regular basis. You knew, for example, that despite how tired you were this morning, it would be "wrong" to skip the first day of class. Or to take a less controversial example, you are likely to agree that a doctor who tortures babies for her own pleasure is not a "good" human being, acting in a way that is "right."

But what, exactly, do we mean when we draw such conclusions? And how do we know that such conclusions are true in the first place? Is moral goodness a feature of the world that we can discover through empirical observation, like gravity? And if not, what does it mean to say that a moral claim is "true"? If moral claims can be true or false, what are we to make of those who sincerely disagree with our moral conclusions? How would we try to convince them that they are mistaken, if indeed they are? And if the ultimate goal of moral argument is to change the *behavior* of others, is trying to convince them of our beliefs the best approach? Are there better ways to motivate others to behave as we wish them to?

If you are having trouble answering these questions, you are not alone. Despite the ubiquity of moral language in our lives, few of us have taken the time to investigate the ontological and epistemological foundations of our moral beliefs. And the theologians and philosophers who *have* devoted their lives to such questions have been unable to reach agreement on even the most basic premises. We might say, then, that the fundamental nature of morality remains "an open question." This open question sits at the heart of what philosophers refer to as "meta-ethics," and insofar as this class will help you think through a variety of answers to the question, it can be understood as a course in meta-ethics. Yet, as the title "Religion, Morality, and Law" suggests, the course also has larger ambitions.

For, despite deep disagreement about the nature of morality, almost everyone seems to agree that "religion" cannot be ignored when addressing these issues. While moral realists often argue that religion is necessary to make ontological sense of objective morality, anti-realists are just as likely to argue that it is religion, and the moral disagreement it has inspired, that presents the greatest challenge to moral realism. And even the secular realists, who wish to deny religious foundations for objective moral facts, are still likely to argue that religion plays a crucial role in transmitting moral beliefs and providing a motivation to live according to those beliefs (as Nietzsche famously argued, Christianity might be nothing more than "Platonism for the masses").

Thus, in assessing various meta-ethical positions, we will also pay close and special attention to the role that religion plays in each. My hope is that exploring these relationships might prepare you to interrogate the widely held, but poorly articulated, view that morality "depends upon" religion in some important way. And, at the same time, I hope you will gain greater insight into the nature and function of "religion" as both a theoretical construct and social institution.

For many of the same reasons, this course will also draw your attention to the idea of "law" and the role that it plays in these conversations. Though law is often thought to be a practical afterthought (once the theoretical questions have been settled), we will quickly see that the language of law pervades many meta-ethical conversations. Indeed, part of what makes law so important for this course is that legal language is just as likely to appear at the *beginning* of meta-ethical discourse as it is at the end and, when it does so, it is often tied up with religious language. Thus, for example, many moral realists contend that the nature of objective moral obligation is best understood as a form of law, linked in some important way to the divine will or nature.

After exploring the differences between this metaphysically robust conception of law and the austere constructivism of legal positivism, we will end the semester by drawing upon all that we have learned to try to answer what I take to be the most important question in political philosophy, and the essential question of this course:

What is the proper function of law in a world where there is deep disagreement about religious and moral matters?

I do not, of course, expect any of you to settle this question, once and for all. Instead, I will be most interested in the way you approach the question. Though one could certainly answer this question without taking this course (and many have!), I hope to see you all using what you have learned to identify and tackle the relevant philosophical issues lurking beneath the surface of this question.

Put differently, this course is not designed to get you to any particular end; it is simply an attempt to help you know where to begin.

LEARNING OUTCOMES (How does she hope I will change?)

Though I hope your views will change as a result of this course, and that you will come to better understand a number of important philosophical and theological arguments, I am most interested in helping you to develop mastery of the four skills outlined below. I've given each learning objective a nickname so that you and I can refer to these as we reflect on your progress throughout the course:

1. **Reading:** Carefully read philosophical and theological arguments such that you are able to identify and reconstruct the main claims, reasons, assumptions, and evidence the authors provide.

2. **Comparison:** Identify and describe important similarities and differences between two or more arguments, while successfully defending the importance of the specific comparisons you draw.

3. **Evaluation:** Evaluate the strength of philosophical or theological arguments by assessing the extent to which their claims follow from their reasons, the evidence is sound, and the most plausible alternatives have been considered.

4. **Synthesis:** Synthesize diverse arguments into a single argument that successfully responds to an authentic, original, and important research question.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS (What do I need to buy and/or bring to class?)

The texts for your required readings will be available on the course Owl-Space page. Students must have a valid NetID to log into Owl-Space, and are required to do so daily to participate in this course. Because I only allow electronic devices to be used for in-class activities, and expect you to have copies of the day's reading assignments with you in class, **you will need to print out hard copies of the material you access through Owl-Space.** I suggest buying a binder and 3-hole punch to store all course readings throughout the semester.

You are also required to create a free student account with TopHat, enroll in this course, and download the TopHat app on your smart phone or tablet. If you do not have a smart phone, you can use your laptop for the same purpose. You will not need to download the app, but you will still need to create a TopHat account and enroll in the course. If you do not have a smartphone, tablet, or laptop, please send me a personal message as soon as possible.

REQUIRED LEARNING ACTIVITIES (If I want to change, what do I have to do?)

In this course, you will be required to complete a number of assignments, or participate in a number of activities, that promote learning. These assignments are not designed to evaluate your performance; they are designed to improve it. As such, they are not graded in the traditional sense of term. However, taken together, all of these assignments contribute to an overall participation grade that contributes to your final grade. For more information about how this participation grade is determined, see the grading section below.

Reading Assignments: Readings are assigned to prepare you for the upcoming class (see the course schedule below for specific assignments). It is your responsibility to do the assigned readings on your own before class so you are familiar with the topics upon which the discussions and in-class activities will be based. Some, if not most, of what you will read will be difficult. You may not get everything the first, second, or even third time you've read it. You should take careful notes (see below) on what you've read, summarizing key points, highlighting unclear passages, raising further questions, and noting where you agree or disagree.

Note Taking: Recent research on the relationship between note taking and learning has found that taking notes in a way that processes the information you encounter can help you learn material in lasting ways. Whereas traditional note taking (which emphasizes storage for the sake of later memorization) can improve short-term recall, using notes to actively engage the ideas you encounter (by reconstructing, synthesizing, applying, and evaluating them) can improve your ability to explain and apply those ideas for many years to come. For these reasons, taking notes in this way (on both the readings and in-class discussions) is an important component of participation in this course. Because I do not allow electronics in class on a daily basis, **you will need to buy a hard copy notebook to use for this class and this class only**. I will collect this notebook twice throughout the semester, and will be checking to see that you have engaged both the reading material and our class discussions in interesting ways.

Reading Questions: In addition to reading and taking notes on the material you've read, you might also be asked to prepare at least two possible questions about the material you've read. When asked to complete these, you should type these up on your Google Doc before we meet and bring an informal copy with you to class. You will then be paired with a classmate who must answer your questions to your satisfaction, while you answer his/her questions to his/her satisfaction. This activity is designed to help you practice and prepare for the exam questions that will assess your mastery of the four learning outcomes described above. Toward that end, I will always let you know which type of questions I'd like you to construct (reading, comparison, evaluation, or synthesis) when I assign questions for homework.

Attendance: While much of your learning will occur while you read, taken notes, and complete out-of-class assignments, being present in class is equally important. As a result, attendance is required and will be taken at the beginning and end of every class period. You are, nevertheless, allowed two unexcused absences throughout the semester. All judgments about excused and unexcused absences will be at my discretion, but **if you wish to receive an excused absence, you must receive approval from me before the missed class period**. The only exceptions to this rule are medical emergencies affecting yourself or your family. In all cases, I may or may not ask for supporting documentation for excused absences.

In-Class Discussions: For you to take full advantage of our class time, it is not enough to simply show up and take your own personal notes. You must also contribute to our conversations. You can do so by commenting on the course readings, asking questions when perplexed, responding to other students, or constructively disagreeing with a claim being discussed. To ensure that I have an accurate record of your in-class participation, every student will be given a notecard with his or her name on it at the beginning of each class period. When a student makes a contribution I judge valuable, I will collect his or her notecard and add it to a participation stack. At the end of the class period, I will collect notecards from the remaining students and add them to a non-participation stack. This final step will also serve as an

attendance mechanism. It is your responsibility to ensure I collect your card when you are present, or when you sense I may have overlooked a valuable contribution.

In-Class Activities: Because research on learning reveals that you are more likely to achieve the learning outcomes of this course by engaging the content and practicing the skills, I will spend very little time lecturing. Instead, our class time will be a mixture of mini-lectures, discussions, and numerous in-class activities designed to help you learn the material and improve your skills. These activities may include, but are not limited to, close reading activities, in-class writing, small-group discussions, workshops, peer-review, and work with audience-response systems (i.e., TopHat).

Facebook Discussions: Because our class period is unlikely to provide enough time for us to cover all the material we would like to discuss each day, students are encouraged to continue (and initiate) class conversations via Facebook. Thoughtful participation on Facebook can serve as a substitute for in-class participation and improve your overall participation grade (see the grading section below for more details). To facilitate this process, I have created a group page for the class. So that you can join without becoming Facebook friends, the group is currently "closed." This means that anyone can send a request to join if he or she has a link to the group page, but the group and its members (though not its content) will be visible in search results and on member timelines. Once you have all requested membership, I will convert the group to "secret," which hides all information about the group from everyone but its members. You can request membership at the following address:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/871364492903432/

Office Hours: Finally, your learning can improve dramatically if you make regular use of office hours to receive individualized feedback about your progress. To help make you comfortable with the process, **students who have not taken a class with me before are required to attend at least one of my office hours within the first two weeks of classes**. You don't need to prepare anything for this meeting; the purpose is simply for us to get to know one another and should last no longer than 30 minutes. You can sign up for an appointment here: http://goo.gl/rjHcUu. I will maintain a similar appointment calendar throughout the semester, and encourage you to sign up for appointments any time you would like further individualized feedback on your work.

Diagnostic Assignments: At the beginning of the semester, I may ask you to complete a few assignments for which you are (relatively) unprepared. As diagnostics, they are designed to help us see the areas in which your mastery is still emerging or developing. The overall goal is to help us plan the best means of facilitating your growth toward mastery throughout the semester.

EVALUATIVE ACTIVITIES (What must I do to demonstrate I've changed?)

As we all know, participation in a course is not always correlated with mastery of the course material. As a result, your final grade will also be determined by the extent to which you have displayed mastery of the four learning outcomes of this course. Though most of the work you will do in this course is designed to *promote* mastery, three separate take-home exams will be occasions for you to display (and me to evaluate) your mastery.

The first exam, due on **February 25th**, will contain 6 questions, divided evenly between questions that assess your reading skills and comparison skills. The questions asked will cover the reading assignments from January 20-February 17th.

The second exam, due on **April 1st**, will contain 9 questions, divided evenly between questions that assess your reading, comparison, and evaluation skills. The questions asked will cover the reading assignments from February 24th-March 26th.

The final exam, due on **May 6th,** will contain 12 questions, divided evenly between questions that assess all four learning outcomes (reading, comparison, evaluation, and synthesis). The questions asked will cover the reading assignments from March 31st-April 23rd.

None of these exams will be graded in the traditional sense of that term. Instead, I will evaluate your work by judging each question to display either "emerging practice," "developing practice," or "mastered practice." Given the grading system I will employ (more details below), you may not need to complete each question on each exam. Whether or not

you complete all 27 questions will depend upon the grade you want to receive, as well as the confidence you have in your ability to display mastery of a particular skill in a single attempt.

The distribution of questions across exams will be as follows:

	Exam 1 (Feb 25)	**Exam 2 (April 1)**	**Exam 3 (May 6)**
Level 1: Reading	☐ Question 1 ☐ Question 2 ☐ Question 3	☐ Question 1 ☐ Question 2 ☐ Question 3	☐ Question 1 ☐ Question 2 ☐ Question 3
Level 2: Comparison	☐ Question 4 ☐ Question 5 ☐ Question 6	☐ Question 4 ☐ Question 5 ☐ Question 6	☐ Question 4 ☐ Question 5 ☐ Question 6
Level 3: Evaluation		☐ Question 7 ☐ Question 8 ☐ Question 9	☐ Question 7 ☐ Question 8 ☐ Question 9
Level 4: Synthesis			☐ Question 10 ☐ Question 11 ☐ Question 12

GRADING (How will she determine my grade?)

Most of us would agree that the goals of teaching and learning are ultimately about knowledge and skill development, rather than grades. Unfortunately, grades have taken on such importance in the minds of students (and—to a lesser degree—employers) that they dominate our minds and, more often than not, actually **undermine** the goals of acquiring knowledge and developing new skills. For these reasons, the goal of my grading system is to remove grading from your experience of this course as much as is possible within the constraints of university requirements. To ensure that the focus of your energies this semester is on learning, most of the work you will complete will not be graded, and those assignments that will be graded will not be graded in a traditional way.

Because my grading system is non-traditional, it is important that you read and re-read this section very carefully and come to class with any questions you might have.

Unlike traditional grading systems, your final letter grade will not be an average of the grades you have received on all the assignments given throughout the semester. In fact, **I will only give you three letter grades this term, and all will be given a the end of the semester**. Does that mean you will have no idea how you are doing throughout the semester? Quite the contrary. Because I will assign your grades according to very specific standards included in this syllabus, you will be able to track your own progress toward those grades throughout the semester.

The first, and most straightforward, grade you will receive is a **participation grade**, which will be determined by the extent to which you participate in class, according to the standards below.

Standards for Participation Grades:

A+	☐ No more than 1 unexcused absences ☐ Participated in class discussions at least 90% of the time **OR** participated in class discussions at least 70% of the time and thoughtfully participated on Facebook on a weekly basis ☐ Notes were always submitted and more than adequate on both occasions ☐ Completed all in-class activities when present ☐ Completed all out-of-class, ungraded assignments

A	☐ No more than 2 unexcused absences ☐ Participated in class discussions at least 80% of the time **OR** participated in class discussions at least 60% of the time and thoughtfully participated on Facebook on a weekly basis ☐ Notes were always submitted and more than adequate on one occasion ☐ Completed all in-class activities when present ☐ Completed all out-of-class, ungraded assignments
A-	☐ No more than 3 unexcused absences ☐ Participated in class discussions at least 80% of the time **OR** participated in class discussions at least 60% of the time and thoughtfully participated on Facebook on a weekly basis ☐ Notes were always submitted and at least adequate on both occasions ☐ Completed all in-class activities when present ☐ Completed all out-of-class, ungraded assignments
B+	☐ No more than 4 unexcused absences ☐ Participated in class discussions at least 60% of the time **OR** participated in class discussions at least 40% of the time and thoughtfully participated on Facebook on a weekly basis ☐ Notes were always submitted and at least adequate on both occasions ☐ Completed all in-class activities when present ☐ Completed all but one out-of-class, ungraded assignments
B	☐ No more than 5 unexcused absences ☐ Participated in class discussions at least 60% of the time **OR** participated in class discussions at least 40% of the time and thoughtfully participated on Facebook on a weekly basis ☐ Notes were always submitted and at least adequate on one occasion ☐ Completed all but one in-class activity when present ☐ Completed all but one out-of-class, ungraded assignments
B-	☐ No more than 6 unexcused absences ☐ Participated in class discussions at least 40% of the time **OR** participated in class discussions at least 20% of the time and thoughtfully participated on Facebook on a weekly basis ☐ Notes were always submitted and at least adequate on one occasion ☐ Completed all but one in-class activity when present ☐ Completed all but one out-of-class, ungraded assignments
C+	☐ No more than 7 unexcused absences ☐ Participated in class discussions at least 40% of the time **OR** participated in class discussions at least 20% of the time and thoughtfully participated on Facebook on a weekly basis ☐ Notes were always submitted ☐ Completed all but one in-class activity when present ☐ Completed all but one out-of-class, ungraded assignments
C	☐ No more than 8 unexcused absences ☐ Participated in class discussions at least 20% of the time **OR** thoughtfully participated on Facebook on a weekly basis. ☐ Notes were always submitted ☐ Completed all but one in-class activities when present ☐ Completed all but one out-of-class, ungraded assignments
C-	☐ No more than 9 unexcused absences ☐ Participated in class discussions at least 20% of the time **OR** thoughtfully participated on Facebook on a weekly basis ☐ Notes were submitted on at least one occasion ☐ Completed all but two in-class activities when present ☐ Completed all but two out-of-class, ungraded assignments

D+	☐ No more than 10 unexcused absences ☐ Participated in class discussions at least 10% of the time **OR** thoughtfully participated on Facebook every other week ☐ Notes were submitted on at least one occasion ☐ Completed all but two in-class activities when present ☐ Completed all but two out-of-class, ungraded assignments
D	☐ No more than 11 unexcused absences ☐ Completed all but two in-class activities when present ☐ Completed all but two out-of-class, ungraded assignments
D-	☐ No more than 12 unexcused absences ☐ Completed all but two in-class activities when present ☐ Completed all but two out-of-class, ungraded assignments

The second, more unusual, grade you will receive is what I am calling a **mastery grade**. At a general level, this grade is designed to communicate the extent to which you have displayed mastery of the skills this course was designed to teach. More specifically, however, it will reflect the extent to which you have displayed mastery of exam questions designed to assess those skills.

You can complete as many (or as few) exam questions as you would like, and your answer to each will be judged to be "emerging," "developing," or "mastered." The number and level of questions you have mastered will then determine your mastery grade, according to the standards below.

Note that you will have more opportunities to display mastery of a specific skill than is required, but that you must display mastery on at least 50% of the questions you've attempted to display true mastery of that skill.

Standards for Mastery Grades:

A+	☐ Display mastery of at least 3 synthesis questions ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 evaluation questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher. ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 comparison questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher. ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 reading questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher.
A	☐ Display mastery of 2 synthesis questions ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 evaluation questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher. ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 comparison questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher. ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 reading questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher.
A-	☐ Display mastery of 1 synthesis question, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher. ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 evaluation questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher. ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 comparison questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher. ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 reading questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher.
B+	☐ Display mastery of at least 3 evaluation questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher. ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 comparison questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher. ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 reading questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher.
B	☐ Display mastery of 2 evaluation questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher. ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 comparison questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher. ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 reading questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher.
B-	☐ Display mastery of 1 evaluation question, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher. ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 comparison questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher.

	☐ Display mastery of at least 3 reading questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher.
C+	☐ Display mastery of at least 3 comparison questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher. ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 reading questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher.
C	☐ Display mastery of 2 comparison questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher. ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 reading questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher.
C-	☐ Display mastery of 1 comparison question, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher. ☐ Display mastery of at least 3 reading questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher.
D+	☐ Display mastery of at least 3 reading questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher.
D	☐ Display mastery of 2 reading questions, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher.
D-	☐ Display mastery of 1 reading question, with a mastery-to-attempt ratio of 50% or higher.

The final grade I will assign at the end of the semester is your **final course grade**, to be submitted to the registrar. This grade will be determined by combining your participation grade with your mastery grade, according to the chart below.

Standards for Final Grades:

		Mastery Grade												
		A+	**A**	**A-**	**B+**	**B**	**B-**	**C+**	**C**	**C-**	**D+**	**D**	**D-**	**F**
Participation Grade	**A+**	A+	A	A	A-	B+	B	B	B-	C+	C	C	C-	D
	A	A+	A	A-	A-	B+	B	B-	B-	C+	C	C-	C-	D
	A-	A	A	A-	B+	B	B	B-	C+	C	C	C-	D+	D
	B+	A	A	A-	B+	B	B	B-	C+	C	C	C-	D+	D
	B	A	A-	A-	B+	B	B-	B-	C+	C	C-	C-	D+	D-
	B-	A	A-	B+	B	B	B-	C+	C	C	C-	D+	D	D-
	C+	A	A-	B+	B	B	B-	C+	C	C	C-	D+	D	D-
	C	A-	A-	B+	B	B-	B-	C+	C	C-	C-	D+	D	D-
	C-	A-	B+	B	B	B-	C+	C	C	C-	D+	D	D	F
	D+	A-	B+	B	B	B-	C+	C	C	C-	D+	D	D	F
	D	A-	B+	B	B-	B-	C+	C	C-	C-	D+	D	D-	F
	D-	B+	B	B	B-	C+	C	C	C-	D+	D	D	D-	F
	F	B+	B	B-	B-	C+	C	C-	C-	D+	D	D-	D-	F

If you show substantial improvement throughout the course of the semester, I may raise your final grade by up to half a letter grade (B to B+, B+ to A-, etc.) and if you fail to comply with any of the course policies below, I reserve the right to lower your final grade by up to half a letter grade.

COURSE POLICIES (What else do I need to know?)

Assignment Deadlines and Make-Up Work: All out-of-class assignments in this course have a specific deadline attached so that we can have time to provide you with feedback and you can have time to begin other projects. The goal, in each case, is to create conditions that facilitate your learning. Any student who feels she or he is unable to submit work on time may request an extension, but these requests must be made before the deadline has passed. **You are limited to two extensions throughout the semester, so use them wisely**. So that you will receive feedback in time for later assignments, **all extensions are limited to 2 days**. In-class activities cannot be made-up, but if you miss one due to an **excused** absence, you will not be penalized. If you miss an in-class activity due to an **unexcused** absence, however, that activity will be considered incomplete. As a result, you should check the syllabus to see what you will miss before taking one of your unexcused absences. Illnesses, family emergencies, or accidents that require extended periods away from school and prevent you from meeting these requirements should be referred immediately to the Committee on Examinations and Standing. This University committee reviews petitions and handles other special problems that involve the academic rules of the University. More information about when and how to file a petition can be found here: http://students.rice.edu/students/Exams2.asp

Use of Electronics: Recent research has found that taking hand written notes improves learning more than taking typed notes on a laptop or other electronic device. As a result, all electronics must be turned off during this class, unless otherwise instructed. If a particular in-class activity requires the use of a specific electronic device, I will let you know in advance so that you can bring that device to class.

Academic Honesty: In this course, all students will be held to the standards of the Rice Honor Code, a code that you pledged to honor when you matriculated at this institution. If you are unfamiliar with the details of this code and how it is administered, you should consult the Honor System Handbook at http://honor.rice.edu/honor-system-handbook/. This handbook outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of your academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Intentional violations of these rules—pursued with intent to acquire an unfair advantage over other students in the class—will be treated as matters for the attention of the Honor Council and will be reported immediately.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Rice University is committed to making reasonable accommodations to assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their academic potential. Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to Disability Support Services; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information about services available to Rice students with disabilities, contact:

Disability Support Services
111 Allen Center
6100 Main Street
Rice University
Houston, TX 77005
713-348-5841
adarice@rice.edu
https://dss.rice.edu/

Syllabus Change: This syllabus is only a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

COURSE SCHEDULE (What will we be reading and doing in class?)

WEEK ONE

1/13	**Introduction to the Course**
	In Class: • Introductions • Patton Oswalt and Louis C.K. Videos • Goals and Expectations • Syllabus Highlights (To Be Continued) • Setting Up Course Technology (TopHat, Facebook, Google Docs, G-mail Filter, Owl-Space)
1/15	**Introduction to the Course, Continued**
	At Home: • Sign up for Office Hour (Required) • Read the Syllabus (Closely!) • Complete Ethical Inventory on TopHat **In Class:** • Questions about Syllabus • Syllabus Highlights (Continued) • Discussion of Ethical Inventory **Due:** • Ethical Inventory Homework (via TopHat)

WEEK TWO

1/20	**Framing the Questions**
	At Home: • William Lane Craig, "Can We Be Good Without God?" *Reasonable Faith*, n.d. • Louise M. Antony, "Good Minus God," *The New York Times* December 18, 2011. • Joel Marks, "Confessions of an Ex-Moralist" *The New York Times* August 21, 2011. • Joel Marks, "Atheism, Amorality, and Animals: A Response" *The New York Times* Sep 2, 2011. • Frans De Wall, "Morals Without God?" *The New York Times* October 17, 2010. • Construct Two "Reading Questions" in Google Doc **In Class:** • Presentation of Pew Research Data • Learning Cell

	• Discussion of Reading • Framing of Course Questions **Due:** • Two “Reading” Questions in Google Doc
1/22	**The Relationship(s) Between Religion and Morality**
	At Home: • Arthur, John. “Morality, Religion, and Conscience.” In *Morality and Moral Controversies*, edited by John Arthur, 77–85. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1999. • Berg, Jonathan. “How Could Ethics Depend on Religion?” In *A Companion to Ethics*, edited by Peter Singer, 525–33. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993. **In Class:** • Discussion of Texts

WEEK THREE

1/27	**Divine Command Theory**
	At Home: • Nielsen, Kai. “God and the Basis of Morality.” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 10, no. 2 (1982): 335–50. **In Class:** • Discussion of Text
1/29	**Divine Command Theory**
	At Home: • Frankena, William K. “Is Morality Logically Dependent on Religion?” In *Religion and Morality: A Collection of Essays*, edited by Gene H. Outka and John P. Reeder, 295–317. Doubleday, 1973. • Construct Two “Reading Questions” in Google Doc **In Class:** • Learning Cell • Discussion of Text **Due:** • Two “Reading” Questions in Google Doc

WEEK FOUR

2/3	**Divine Command Theory**

	At Home: • Adams, Robert Merrihew. “A Modified Divine Command Theory of Ethical Wrongness.” In *Religion and Morality: A Collection of Essays*, edited by Gene H. Outka and John P. Reeder, 318–47. Doubleday, 1973. • Construct Two “Reading Questions” in Google Doc **In Class:** • Learning Cell • Discussion of Text **Due:** • Two “Reading” Questions in Google Doc
2/5	**Natural Law**
	At Home: • Buckle, Stephen. “Natural Law.” In *A Companion to Ethics*, edited by Peter Singer, 161–74. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993. • Aquinas, Thomas. “Summa Theologica.” In *Readings in the Philosophy of Law*, edited by John Arthur and William H. Shaw, 111–17. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2001. **In Class:** • Discussion of Texts

WEEK FIVE

2/10	**Alternative Religious Perspectives**
	At Home: • Gustafson, James M. “Religion and Morality from the Perspective of Theology.” In *Religion and Morality: A Collection of Essays*, edited by Gene H. Outka and John P. Reeder, 125–54. Garden City, N.Y.: AnchorPress/Doubleday, 1973. • Construct Two “Reading Questions” in Google Doc **In Class:** • Learning Cell • Discussion of Text **Due:** • Two “Reading” Questions in Google Doc
2/12	**Secular Moral Realism**
	At Home: • Nagel, Thomas. “The Objective Basis of Morality.” In *Vice and Virtue in Everyday Life*, edited by Christina Hoff Sommers and Fred Sommers, 252–57. Australia ; Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2012. • Anderson, Elizabeth. “If God Is Dead, Is Everything Permitted?” In *The Portable Atheist:*

	Essential Readings for the Nonbeliever, by Christopher Hitchens, 333–48, Philadelphia, PA: Da Capo Press, 2007. **In Class:** • Discussion of Texts

WEEK SIX

2/17	**Secular Moral Realism**
	At Home: • Harman, Gilbert. "The Nature of Morality." In *Ethics: History, Theory, and Contemporary Issues*, edited by Steven M. Cahn and Peter J. Markie, 634–44. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. • Construct Two "Reading Questions" in Google Doc **In Class:** • Learning Cell • Discussion of Text **Due:** • Two "Reading" Questions in Google Doc
2/19	**NO CLASS**

WEEK SEVEN

2/24	**Moral Constructivism: Cultural Relativism and Subjectivism**
2/25	**EXAM ONE DUE**
2/26	**Moral Constructivism: Cultural Relativism and Subjectivism**

WEEK EIGHT

3/10	**Moral Constructivism: Cultural Relativism and Subjectivism**
3/12	**Moral Constructivism: Cultural Relativism and Subjectivism**

WEEK NINE

3/17	**Moral Constructivism: Evolutionary Perspectives**
3/19	**Moral Constructivism: Evolutionary Perspectives**

WEEK TEN

3/24	Moral Constructivism: Social Contract Theory
3/26	Moral Constructivism: Social Contract Theory

WEEK ELEVEN

3/31	What is the Nature of Law?
4/1	EXAM TWO DUE
4/2	Legal Positivism

WEEK TWELVE

4/7	Legal Positivism
4/9	Natural Law

WEEK THIRTEEN

4/14	Natural Law
4/16	Legal Realism

WEEK FOURTEEN

4/21	Moral Diversity and the Law
4/23	Moral Diversity and the Law

WEEK FIFTEEN

5/6	EXAM THREE DUE